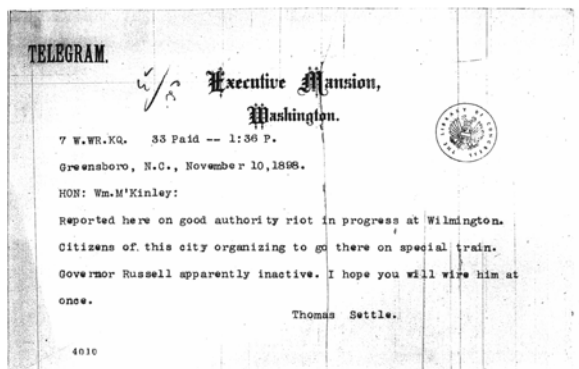


Walser, could have followed the lead of the national attorney general and assisted in the investigation. However, it appears that no investigative action was taken by the office.<sup>5</sup> Assuming the largest role as far as state government was concerned, Adjutant General Andrew Cowles aided Walker Taylor at the request of the governor when Russell ordered out the state militia companies in the region.<sup>6</sup>

At the national level, President McKinley had been warned before the election by men such as Senator Jeter Pritchard and his appointed Collector of Customs in the Port John C. Dancy, that the city was armed and that violence was expected at any time. McKinley received word via telegram of the conflict and held a cabinet meeting to discuss the situation.



Telegram to McKinley from  
Thomas Settle, November 10, 1898.  
Image: William McKinley Papers, National  
Archives microfilm

<sup>5</sup>A review of the attorney general's records do, however, show a significant rise in litigation throughout the state regarding contested elections and the refusal of some incumbent appointed and elected officials to surrender their offices to newly elected Democrats after the November 1898 elections. State Attorney General's Office, Central Files, correspondence, Letter Books and Closed Case Files, 1898-1900, North Carolina State Archives, Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

<sup>6</sup> *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of North Carolina for the Year 1898*; Daniel Russell Governor's Papers, State Archives, Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

McKinley's sources were limited to newspaper reports since no communication came to the president from the governor's office. McKinley and Secretary of War Russell Alger also met for two hours to discuss the situation. In a press conference after the meeting, Alger called the affair a "disgrace" to the state. He said that they had received news of 8 dead and would have sent troops had Russell requested the assistance. North Carolina papers called the threat of sending in troops a "crime," and implied that the use of federal troops was an offense similar to military occupation during Reconstruction after the Civil War. Delegates from Wilmington on both sides of the issue, plus others acting on behalf of Wilmington's black citizens, visited and corresponded with McKinley and his staff repeatedly after the violence ended.<sup>7</sup> Over

<sup>7</sup> The *Washington Post* reported that a dozen men from Wilmington were in Washington attempting to meet with the president concerning the rioting. The men had arrived the day after the riot, and other "refugees" were scattered throughout the city staying with friends and discussing the events in North Carolina. Julian S. Carr, chairman of the Durham County Democratic Executive Committee and wealthy industrialist, penned a note to President McKinley that was published in the papers. Carr's letter explained that white men "are leading the victorious column this morning and will rule North Carolina . . . no need of troops now." The actual letter received by McKinley from Carr was much less flowery. He told McKinley not to send troops to the state and made "no apologies for being a Southern Democrat." Carr offered to help the president "in solving the question" and promised to be in Washington as soon as needed to discuss the issues. Carr staked his claim as an important businessman when he stated that he employed 1,000 men, "largely colored and they would die for me." He closed with saying that he was "in position to answer for the South and especially North Carolina" to the president. A small postscript informed McKinley that Carr paid large sums of money in taxes and, as a result, felt that "no one is more interested in good stable government." *Evening Dispatch* (Wilmington), November 14, 1898; *Wilmington Messenger* November 12, 1898; Julian S. Carr to President